

**From:** Ron Hitchens  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/27/02 1:51pm  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

DOJ,

I wish to comment on the proposed settlement in the Microsoft Antitrust Settlement.

I have been a computer professional for over 25 years and in that time have observed the behavior of many computer companies. It is well known in the computer industry that Microsoft doesn't play fair. They routinely thwart and/or crush competition in any way they can. Microsoft is predatory, plain and simple.

Microsoft was found guilty of anti-competitive practices. This is good, because it proves out what has been widely known by the entire industry for many years. But the proposed settlement is woefully inadequate.

Microsoft, though clearly found guilty of anti-competitive behavior, is not being punished for that behavior. They are in fact benefiting by the so-called punishment - contributing Microsoft software to schools is hardly a punishment. It is basically low-cost advertising for Microsoft and further helps to squeeze out alternatives. A better punishment would be for Microsoft to donate the cash equivalent of the retail cost of the software, to be spent as the schools please, but that still would not address the real problem.

It's painfully clear the proposed settlement is politically influenced and greased by that best of political lubricants: money. Microsoft has mountains of cash and knows how to wield it as an effective weapon. They are also masters of the FUD attack.

I urge you, the Department of Justice, to not be blinded by Microsoft's propaganda campaign or to be influenced by the political pressures I'm sure are exerted upon you. In this day and age, it seems ethics are a quaint anachronism. Lawyers it seems can twist anything with enough money and PR. Microsoft has the best attorneys money can buy, still were found guilty. Please don't ignore that screaming fact.

You have a chance to do the right thing here, don't blow it.

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"Computers are useless. They can only give you answers." -Pablo Picasso